

Looking Deeper



A Swan's Questions & Answers

Klong-chen rab-'byams pa

Translated and annotated by Herbert V. Guenther

Looking Deeper

A Swan's Questions & Answers

Klong-chen rab-'byams pa

Translated and annotated by Herbert V. Guenther

©1983 by Dr. Herbert V. Guenther.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 0-931454-09-3

Library of Congress cataloging in Publication Data

Klon-chen-pa Dri-med'od-zer, 1308-1363.

Looking deeper

Translation of: *Nañ pa'i dris lan sprin gyi shiñ po.*

1. Religious life (Buddhism)—Early works to 1800.

2. Buddhism—China—Tibet—Early works to 1800.

I. Guenther, Herbert V. II. Title

BQ7775.K5713 1984 294.3'44 84-179

Published by



Box 60

Porthill, ID 83853

in association with

Yasodhara Ashram Society

Box 9, Kootenay Bay

B.C. V0B 1X0 Canada

Printed and Bound in Canada

Dedicated
to Swami Sivananda Radha

Acknowledgments

For helpful comments and criticisms I wish to thank Dr. Lopsang Dargyay, my daughter Mrs. Edith Kimbell and, last but not least, my wife, Dr. Ilse Guenther.

Introduction

“Never has the world been different” (*na kadacid anidrsam jagat*) is a famous statement in the Mimamsa system of Indian philosophy, and its validity, whether we like it or not, remains incontestable. We may even, without doing violence to the above quotation, extrapolate and say that the world also will not be different as long as there are human beings around. For, what we call “world” is primarily a human world—a world which is first of all experienced as a human being’s life-world, existentially apprehended and only at a later stage reduced to and known as an array of objects, the knowing subject becoming itself one of these “objective” entities. The experienced world is a world which in its unfolding displays a plurality of versions, all of them interacting with each other, none of them existing in isolation.

Throughout the ages there have been people, albeit a few only, who, dissatisfied with the commonplace, the mechanistic everyday-life credo, have been striving for higher levels of awareness, for quality of life and for meaning as a non-mechanistic dynamic perspective. Such striving does not aim at fixation and rigidity, nor is it concerned with reducing man to a model of predictable behavior “beyond freedom and dignity.” Its aim has been, and always will be, understanding reality by being “in tune” with it and interpreting the information pouring into us in the light of enhanced value and pertinence. This dynamic process certainly cannot be equated with becoming absorbed in a static All or subordinated to pre-established deterministic myths which deprive man of his specific humanness. Rather, this striving is an ever active expression of the as yet unarticulated conviction that man shares in an evolutionary process which is not tied to any particular system or species. Such a conviction carries

with it a sense of fearlessness which prevents one from "opting out" by running away from oneself in the futile attempt to merge in a world of things. Therefore a person who strives is by virtue of his striving already an "outsider," he does not fit into the amorphous and anonymous majority of mankind with its petty "individualism," the evocative euphemism for the impersonal mode which governs the life of the masses and which epitomizes cultural and spiritual stagnation, its abysmal hollowness being camouflaged by the cacophonous rhetoric of a fundamentalist religion as well as political fanaticism.

It may sound paradoxical, but only a person who is sure of himself can also transcend himself. Thus, in one sense, he may be an "outsider," while, in another, he is a true "insider." His courage and strength derive from his knowledge of "not having been left out" or having been cut off from and hence having no access to a wider field of "energy." Rather he is very much "in it" by feeling and knowing himself to be something like a local condensation of this energy field, a temporary standing wave pattern, as we would say nowadays, which is yet totally interlinked with everything around it. Or, restating this idea in a more picturesque language: man is the universe and yet only a part of it, just as a cloud is the atmosphere and yet only a part of it.

This feeling of being *an* "outsider" and yet being *the* "insider," participating in an ever expanding awareness and ever deepening understanding of life's interconnectedness, is poetically expressed by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa (1308-1364).¹

His *A Swan's Questions and Answers*² is distinctly autobiographical in a manner rarely found in oriental literature. He identifies himself with the king of swans who lives as a loner amongst a flock of mallards—this image of an all-male community implying the monastic setting which the "swan" Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa outgrows and feels compelled to leave.

It should be noted that the rendering of the Tibetan term *ngang-pa* (corresponding to the Sanskrit word *hamsa*) by "swan" is a concession to Western thinking in which the image of a swan, in addition to many ambivalent connotations, serves pre-eminently as a metaphor for what is majestic, stately, and dignified. In the Indian tradition, which deeply influenced Tibetan thought, it is the goose which serves as a symbol for ravishing beauty and highest intelligence. Thus, Indian poets like to compare the gait as well as the voice of a beautiful woman with that of a goose (*hamsagāminī*, *hamsagad-gadā*) and the love play between a man and a woman with the sporting of *hamsa* couples. In the Brahmanical tradition, the goose is the vehicle of Brahmā, as may be seen on a sculpture from Elephanta, where Brahmā is carried by a row of geese to witness Śiva's dance. In the Buddhist tradition emphasis is on the goose's intelligence which, according to a wide-spread belief, enables it to separate milk from water and to feed on the former. Not only is the goose appreciative of what is worthy wherever it may be found, as shown in a sculpture from Mathura depicting geese circumambulating the Buddha's hut, it also is capable of expounding ethical principles, as we are told in a Jātaka story where a queen, having dreamt listening to a golden gander, orders a huntsman to capture and bring it to her so that she may listen to it. This story is represented in one of the Ajanta murals. For all these reasons, truly spiritual individuals, who have always been extremely rare, have been called *paramahamsa* "supreme gander/swan."

However, despite his intelligence Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa is a nobody. He is poor and lives in a society which bases its standards on the display of wealth and has its sole interest in the trivialities and superficialities which easily catch the eye and make no demands on effort. In that society anyone who cannot compete materialistically and is more prone, if not impudent, to question the very validity of

such activity, is a misfit and an outsider. Most distressing is the fact that this hollowness had also become a characteristic of what once has been a seat of learning. The monastery of bSam-yas,³ associated with the greatest figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, had no longer anything to offer. It had become part of and was indistinguishable from the "establishment." Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa is painfully aware of the tension between non-materialistic and materialistic values, and when he chooses the pursuit of meaning in life he relies on a kind of visionary insight which remains flexible and open. The vision which at first expresses itself in the image of Avalokiteśvara calls up a world which reflects man's place in it as well as man's responsibility towards it. Avalokiteśvara is the symbol of compassion—it is compassion which we expect for ourselves from our world, and it is compassion which we are dutifully bound to exercise in dealing with our world. But compassion can easily turn into a most cruel sentimentalism. It does so if it is not permeated by knowledge, appreciative of and sensitive to whatever constitutes our world, be this our physical or spiritual reality, both of which lose their separateness in this deeper awareness. Such knowledge is imaged as Mañjuśrī. Thus it is through compassion that we deal with others while through knowledge we address ourselves to them. However, both compassion and knowledge have a common ground in something still more profound. They are more like two intertwining strands in the fabric we call life, whose mystery we glimpse in each. This mystery is envisioned as Vajrapāṇi, the spirituality not only of man but of the universe.⁴

Although Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa disclaims any intention to demonstrate his ability as poet, his poetic genius and his profound knowledge of the rules of ornate poetry (*kāvya*) are evident throughout his writings. He lets the "hero" speak about his virtues, thus showing his knowledge of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*. In this work,

Daṇḍin rejects the rigid distinction between an *ākhyāyikā* (a story narrated by the hero himself) and a *kathā* (a story told by someone else) and other purely formalistic features which later were to dominate poetic compositions, and states that in either form the depiction of his own qualities by the hero is not a defect.⁵ How much Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa as a poet appreciated Daṇḍin's work is borne out by the fact that in a short treatise he illustrates Daṇḍin's thirty-five poetic ornaments (*alaṃkāra*) by examples of his own.⁶

But for the poetic style, the *Swan's Questions and Answers* could have been written today instead of in the fourteenth century—indeed, “never has the world been different”! And it is because of this timeless quality that this work will continue to have something to say to us in our time. Even today, religious charlatanism, intellectual intolerance, and social repression are the ever present evil forces which the sincere have to identify and overcome.

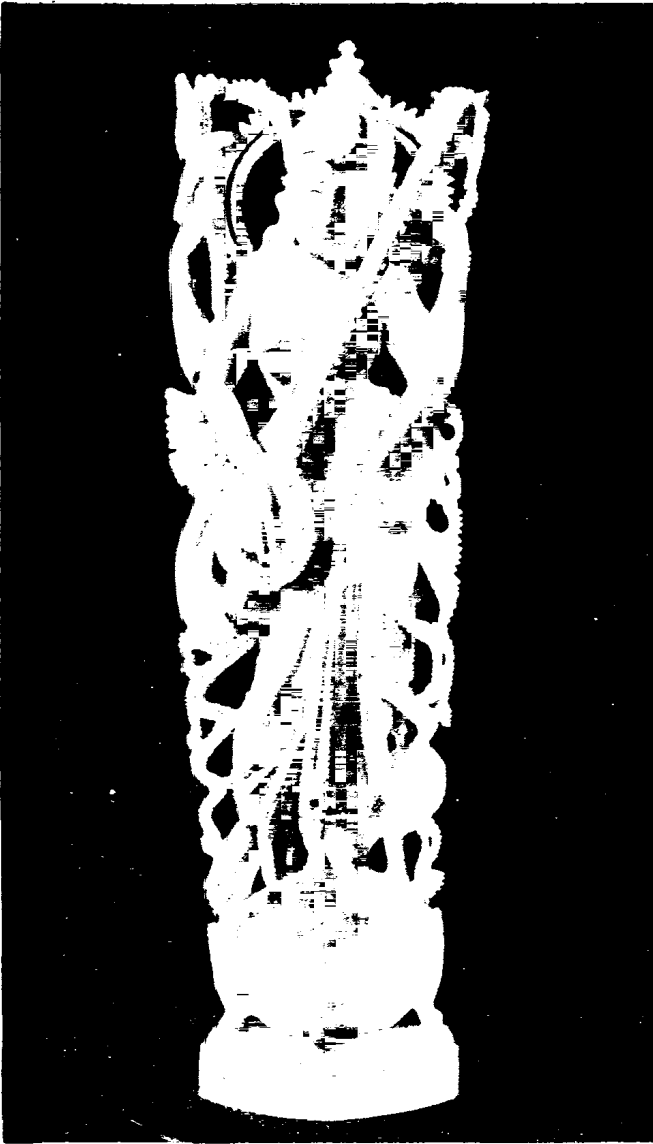


Within the limits set by the character of the Tibetan language, Tibetan ornate poetry (*snyan-sngags*) follows its Indian prototype. Indian ornate poetry (*kāvya*) seems to have evolved from lyrical as well as epigrammatical compositions expressing the thoughts and, above all, the feelings and sentiments of a single person. Only at a later stage of its development more importance was attached to form than to content. In the Tibetan context a distinction must be made between those *ad hoc* compositions which illustrate a particular rule in the handbook of poetics (notably Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*) and therefore do not belong to the mainstream of Tibetan literary activity, and those compositions which apply these rules in order to provide added beauty of form to a content which itself already

constitutes a beautiful image either of nature or of sentiment inviting the observer, be he listener, reader, or onlooker, to share in the wider field of human experience and existence.

Ornate poetry, whether Tibetan or Indian, is an art as well as a creative act which continues to stimulate our awareness by its richness of meaning and which by using the power of imagination keeps our minds from becoming somnolent. Above all, a poem invites participation by disclosing a world perspective which itself is an opening up of new dimensions of openness which yet do not obliterate the old but allow it to be seen afresh.

A Swan's Questions & Answers



Sarasvati

A Swan's Questions & Answers

Salutation to Sarasvatī,⁷ noble Lady of Speech.

Salutation to the leader of sentient beings
Foremost among saints, teacher supreme
of sentient beings,
Whose feet are respectfully touched by the crowns
of the heads of all sentient beings,
And who to higher goals directs sentient beings.

This man from bSam-yas which is (like) a lotus pond
In which the flower of poetry never wilts
and which captivates the clear-minded mallards,
Has been unwilling to stay and has been thinking of going
to other regions and so now
Composes this Cloud-force of Questions and Answers
by the King of the Swans.

There at the foot of a snow-mountain is dPal-gyi bSam-yas—a
place through which the Brahmaputra river gently flows, where in
former times many spiritual people have gathered:

The garden where spiritual people of yore have stayed;
The place where Padmasambhava⁸ has lived;
The sustenance for the spreading and the continuation
of the Teaching in the country of snow mountains.
dPal-gyi bSam-yas is the birthplace
of the wholesome and good.

To the south, in a not too distant region, there was a lovely place which was garlanded with a variety of trees and where over flowerbeds bees were hovering. There, in a pond full of cool, dark blue water and bedecked with a network of lotus flowers, lived together with many mallards the king of the swans. Although he shone in the glory of many virtues—self-discipline, contemplative awareness, appreciative discernment, and inner freedom—the saying

Never noticed by anyone

applied to him.

Even if self-discipline is one's ornament,
intelligence one's wings
And one's well-trained and handsome body
manifests spiritual values,
If one has no wealth, one is not noticed by anybody
But regarded as one to be dismissed
like some low-class person.⁹

It so happened that at this time the king of the swans was travelling to many places to see the attractions offered by cities and palaces. When he spied into people's lodgings, (he heard) these lamentations of those respectable persons who felt dejected because the Victorious One's teaching had entered its last five-hundred years; that those who had taken monastic vows were concerned with worldly pleasures and distractions and had forsaken the Three Disciplines¹⁰ and the treasure of learning, so that these fakes, who gave the appearance of being genuine, lived by engaging in farming, trading and maintaining a household; that those who lived ethically and upheld spiritual values, were as rare as a star in daytime; and that

those who took pride in their greatness spent their time unethically, unconcerned about spiritual values, and committed violence to those who lived properly.

Alas, nowadays in this degenerate age
The sun of the Teaching is about to set.
Those who would normally be praised are but counterfeits,
Those proud of their greatness are low-class persons.

Those who wear monks' robes are mentally householders.
Those who are honored by the masses
are just ordinary persons,
Their fraudulent meditation is as rigid as rock,
Their hypocrisy is camouflaged by a tangle of duties.
They are fettered by chains of craving and meddling.

Similarly, those who pose as spiritual teachers
Become angry at those who maintain spiritual values,
They praise that which has nothing to do with spiritual values
And deceive by all sorts of tricks those who serve them.

Further, those who pose as spiritual teachers
Profess what seems to be spiritual, but conduct themselves
unspiritually;
They busy themselves with words and letters, but dismiss
the profound meaning.
They are fettered by the chains of sycophants
and their own haughtiness.

Further, those who pose as spiritual teachers
Stupid in matters sublime but otherwise cunning,
As the greatest among fools,
With unspiritual dealings deceive the common people.

Further, those who pose as spiritual teachers
 Are outwardly calm, inwardly fierce,
 They dismiss a poor man even if he is sincere,
 Yet the rich they gather around them like clouds,
 even if they are foolish.

Similarly, those who have taken monastic vows
 Guard their alms but dispense their self-discipline,¹¹
 Lacking both patience and diligence
 They cast far away concentration and discernment.

They like not studies, but merry-making,
 They pursue not spiritual values, but unspiritual ends,
 They grasp not learning, but young women,
 They bow not to the noble, but to the lowly,
 They don't look up and far ahead, but are short-sighted
 and unmindful.

Alas, what a shocking situation—
 These people make the greatest efforts to achieve
 their desires,
 But are lazy regarding the wholesome and good.
 By doing evil they hope to gain a pleasant rebirth.
 They are always bustling like householders.

They conceal their own faults, but discuss others'.
 They lack gradation in understanding and are inflexible
 like a stick.
 Because they think highly of those who aid and abet evil,
 They will vilify the sincere.
 They lead others the wrong way,
 Though clever they are drifters and spiritual values
 have no control over them.

Despising spiritually minded persons,
 They hold unethical people in high esteem.
 If they see a handout they embrace the religious life
 Yet when they witness revelry they are mentally
 householders.

They think and act alike
 With those who have no spiritual values.
 They strongly despise those who are sincere.
 For among the crooked the defect of straightness
 Is like a painful burden to set down.

Clerics and laymen
 In whom the well of compassion and faith has dried up
 Are like wild swans who wearing monks' robes
 Sneak into houses as if into a lotus pond, and
 Drink themselves insane,
 Their raucous voices reaching to the ends of the sky.
 Gad, what a spectacle!

Oh no, there is nothing wrong with it:
 As the master so the servants,
 As the condition so the effect.
 In their company sincere people
 Become despondent and are like a daytime star,
 Like a lamp in (dark) places
 where poisonous serpents dwell.

With the setting of the sun of the Teaching
 Precious trees are encircled by poisonous snakes,
 The lakes and ponds of sincere people dry up.

And when the thousand-rayed sun touches the peak
 of the Western Mountain
 The time has come for the darkness of Māra
 to cover the world.¹²

The eyes of those who yearn
 for the island of liberation close
 And the bright light of excellent people dims.
 Look how now everywhere friends in the spiritual life
 become fewer and fewer
 And the world with its evil comrades is extolled.

Then the swan went to towns and townships and there he saw that
 the householders, too, did not abide by spiritual values; they made
 their living by evil deeds; they did not honor their parents, nor elders,
 nor the Three Jewels, but did their best to act by treachery and deceit.
 Some who still acted properly lamented:

Alas! nowadays in this region
 The sun of the good old times has set.
 Since now the companion of evil people has risen¹³
 People no longer honor their parents and elders
 But listen to wanton women.

Without a sense of self-respect and decorum¹⁴
 They delight in a dissolute life.
 In their impetuosity they care not about immediate
 nor future consequences
 But keep thought and action apart.

Since they think that no one is worse off than themselves
 They grudge others' success;

They pity themselves tremendously
 But feign concern for others.
 Not being straightforward, they take sides
 And repay kindness with evil.

They do not maintain lasting friendship but are eager
 to make new friends,
 They downgrade worthy people, and extol base ones,
 Having no positive attitudes but only furthering
 their own interests
 They do not stick with one thing, but change ever so often.
 Like a snake, some display a double-tongue.

Having neither courage nor astuteness,
 they are treacherous and mean.
 What is good in itself they regard as a blemish.

The wrong way—that they call virtue.
 Before someone who does harm they bow as before a god.
 Those who point out what is beneficial they dismiss
 as if they were poison.
 They mete out punishment to the good and with it
 They encourage the wicked.

Alas, it is difficult to rely on the people of today;
 Evil behavior proliferates.
 Be wary of him in whom qualities are few
 and who is an abode of defects
 And who holds evil behavior to be right conduct.

The king of the swans became quite depressed and returned to his pond. While he stayed there he caught sight of a bird¹⁵ scanning the

**earth, with the intensity of a storm-cloud on its flight to the south,
and he asked the bird:**

**Lovely bird, thou who art soaring in the bright sky, and
Who art like the king of the snow mountains
enhanced in beauty by wings,
You seem to survey the earth from the height of the open
and brilliant sky;
What have you seen and where are you going?**

The bird answered:

**I go to the forest "Birthplace of Magnificence";
A garden similar to the lovely realms of the gods,
Where there are many flowers and fruits
and lakes and ponds filled with cool water,
Where there is no violence, and where in solitude
knowledge is pursued.**

The king of the swans asked:

**O Handsome one, what are its features that draw you
to going there?**

The bird replied:

**In the east of this country of snow mountains
There is a city "Birthplace of Happiness,"
A place with throngs of people.
Close-by in a southerly direction
There is a forest "Birthplace of Magnificence."**

It is full of people delighting in solitude
 and pursuing knowledge,
 Full of gods and saintly persons.
 It is replete with flowers and fruits.

The place, where Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara
 Are asking questions about life's meaning,
 Is Vajrapāṇi's castle.¹⁶

Even at the present time, in that region
 No evil spirits doing harm to others, ever come there;
 And even ordinary people are at peace and happy.
 If you are concerned with ultimate release
 Go to contemplate in this garden.

With these words the bird was gone.

Then the king of the swans took stock of the qualities of his
 residence and of the many defects of the country and, having become
 eager to go away, he told the mallards:

Although this pond is very pleasing and delightful
 And teeming with a multitude of beautiful birds
 I have become weary of the evils of the various countries
 And having discerned the virtues of forests,¹⁷
 I shall go there to contemplate.

The mallards exclaimed:

Leaving this beautiful dPal-gyi bSam-yas,
 Encircled by snow mountains and enveloped by large,
 beautiful trees,



Encircled by snow mountains . . .

Having many flowers and fruits,
the residence of Padmasambhava,
O king of the swans, with your lovely wings,
where will you go?

The swan said:

Listen, you beautiful birds in this lovely pond,
Friends of a friendship that has lasted long;
Although this country is beautiful and very pleasing,
The sun of the good old times has set
And the companion of vulgar people has risen.
The *padma* lotus of sincere people has closed
And the *kumuda* lotus of evil behavior has opened.

Even those who have taken monastic vows
have plunged into the pool of pleasures,
And it has been filled by crowds who no longer possess
the snow mountain beauty of higher concentration
And have become separated from the wealth
of the Three Disciplines.
Householders also have been stripped
of the garment of decency.
And wherever there is lewdness there they shamelessly
enjoy themselves.
Sincerity is abandoned and stupidity is on display:
A person with no money, even if he is wise, is slighted
and sent off far away,
But fools who have wealth are honored like gods.
The distinction between the ethical and the unethical
is turned upside down.

In such an environment, this man of bSam-yas
Finds it hard to make a living; he is constantly scorned
by all.

Those who uphold spiritual values are despised
and their qualities are belittled.

The crowd of vulgar people living in this country
Are never pleased and nobody can make them shape up.
Close by and far away the incidences of violence increase.
The sincere are cursed and evil behavior is praised.
Having seen this state of affairs my mind has revolted.

Moreover, having heard about the qualities of forests
My mind yearns for the garden of peace. Listen:

To the east of the snow mountain there is a beautiful garden,
Delightful in its solitude, free from all violence,
It is encircled by garlands of fruit trees and fresh flowers;
The sound of cool waterfalls is heard and
Beautiful birds and deer roam there at pleasure.

There are many trees and medicinal
plants and mountain caves.

The wind constantly blows as a fan for cool breeze.
There is plenty of grass and flowers and fruits.
It is the place where contemplative people live—
The forest grove "Birthplace of Magnificence"—
there I shall go.

When he spoke thus the flock of mallards said:

Just as the moon sets together with its light,
 Will not this poetry together with the thousands of Sūtras
 Also disappear here simultaneously with
 You, O king of the swans, our bright sun setting?

The swan said:

Here in dPal-gyi bSam-yas among the snow mountains,
 The place where spiritual persons of yore have lived,
 A semblance of explanations and debates
 Has lasted for a while due to the kindness of a few.

This valley with its lakes and rivers of poetry
 Delighting wise persons and
 Captivating the clear-minded mallards
 Will vanish in a short while.

The sincere people of the past are no more
 And the clear-minded, (like) bees,
 have scattered like clouds.
 When I am no more
 The ocean of poetry in this country will dry up.

Deprived of the sun's light
 The waxing moon will set.
 When the crowds of stars are no more
 The world will turn into darkness.

However, should one or another sincere person
 Rely on the messages in which my thoughts
 have been expressed—

**That message of poetry which is like a net of light
May from time to time erupt like a lightning flash,
storm's friend.**

Then the mallards said:

**You of beautiful wings, tell us
why sincere people have become few here
and why evil behavior has spread and violence is the rule?**

The swan replied:

**In previous times people of evil behavior
Have driven out and banished sincere people,
Because of the lingering force of this fact
there are nowadays here
Few sincere people, while evil behavior is rampant.**

Then the mallards respectfully said:

**After the king of the swans has gone away
What shall we say
When some people who stay on here
Ask about your final words?**

The swan said:

**Please tell them these words which will point out
what is beneficial:
This is the message I have for the tutors and spiritual friends:
Preserve well the precious teaching of the Victorious One;
Strive by good actions for the welfare of those
who are spiritually educable,
Look after the needy and have a loving disposition.**

**This is the message I have for the venerable monks:
Chain well the elephant of the Three Disciplines
with the chains of studies;
Rely on the wise and be diligent
in wholesome meritorious actions;
Be content and imbued with the treasure of humility.**

**This is the message I have for the teachers of philosophy:
Revere the Teacher Supreme,¹⁸ be without pride, and
Striving day and night devote yourself to elucidation
and further studies;
Experience what you have learned.**

**This is the message I have for the bKa-gdams-pa champions
of monastic discipline:¹⁹
Do not think about the eight topics of the world;
Revere the Teacher Supreme, be without pride and
Discipline the mind as you discipline body and speech.**

**This is the message I have for the great meditators,
bent on wholeness:
Don't degrade (your lofty) vision into (silly) conduct;
Don't wander through the ten regions,
stay in mountain solitudes
And concern yourself with that which ultimately matters,
Experience-as-such.²⁰**

**This is the message I have for the mystics,
bent on the sublime:
Don't set others aflame, subdue yourself;
Not straying, by day or night, from the import
of the Developing and Fulfilment Stages,²¹
Persevere in the recitation of sacred formulas and protect
the Teaching.**

**This is the message I have for the Bon followers,²²
bent on the eternal:**

**Give up wrong views. All that goes by appearance
and possibility, Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa,
Is the outcome of cause and effect interaction;
When you understand this (fact) properly (as not
being subject to cause and effect), you will achieve
the two resources (necessary for spiritual life). ***

**This is the message I have for the experts in various subjects:
First learn to become efficient in whatever you do,
Then exercise what you have learned,
and finally be without pride.
Having few desires yourself, act naturally for others.**

**This is the message I have for those in high district offices:
In dealing with those below you apply fair justice,
Be very prudent with secret information,
Strive for good and avoid evil.**

**This is the message I have for elders:
When you lay down a rule, do not distinguish between near
and distant relatives,
Carefully calculate the general effect and assess
the immediate and future consequences.
Be circumspect in all undertakings.**

**This is the message I have for the nobles:
Honor elders and don't be henpecked;
Keep a straightforward attitude and long-lasting friendships;
Subdue enemies, protect friends
and cultivate your land thoroughly.**

This is the message I have for the ladies of the country:

Respect the lords and be kind to servants;

**Be industrious in performing your duties
and be magnanimous;**

**Be bounteous with food
and make relatives and friends happy.**

This is the message I have for young adults:

Be courageous and astute, sociable,

Discreet and reliable; listen to the words of older people.

Love your relatives and do your work assiduously.

This is what I have to say to the adolescents in the country:

Friendly and respectful, clean and neat,

Unassuming by temperament and very meticulous

Do not delight in revelry but act graciously.

This is the message I have for young children:

Do not create mischief and listen to your parents,

Be very cautious and endeavor to learn virtues.

Act so as to be liked by all people.

All the mallards in the pond were pleased with these words; they saluted the swan and unanimously said:

O Handsome one, we are delighted to have this nectar of your fine words fill our ears, please bring about the rainfall of ethical conduct which will be of long-lasting benefit and the cause for ultimate release.

The swan said:

Well-said, friends, listen faithfully:
 Our life is unsteady like an autumn cloud;
 Our body is like a water bubble, without any essence;
 What has been put together and piled up is like a dream
 or a magic show.

Once you have fully understood that it cannot be trusted,
 Give up the clamor of worldly life, and in secluded places,
 On a comfortable seat with your body at ease,
 For the sake of all living beings raise your mind
 to its highest level,
 And then let this mind whose status
 is an abiding genuineness,
 Remain in this its state which is dissociate from thematic
 proliferations, without subjectively interfering
 with whatever arises in it; (lastly)
 Transmute your post-concentrative activities into the
 transparency of a triune configurative process.²³
 This is the ultimate of all that is, that which really matters,
 It is the highway which all the Buddhas have travelled.

In the meanwhile contemplate transitoriness and death.
 That which has been put together and has no essence
 is full of defects;
 Saṃsāra is to be thought of as also like this.
 All that appears in various forms is devoid of reality.
 Understand appearances to be manifest forms of openness.

With these words he went away from the pond.

The flock of mallards followed the swan and accompanied him to
 a place from where one could see the chain of snow mountains in the
 east. They saluted him reverently and said:

We humble ourselves in service to the king of the swans.
Look at what separation does. Alas! We shall never see
again the light of thy lotus feet.

Weeping with grief they went back to their pond. The king of the swans together with his personal attendant (called Handsome), however, went eastwards.

After much travel they spied in a forest grove at the peak of a snow mountain rays of light, blue like the color of a bright sky, glowing within some brilliant deep blue, smooth and yet very intense. Handsome asked the king of the swans in awe:

I am alarmed that the pale moon in this autumn night
Is crashing along with the bright sky.
Is this a display by Brahmā or Mahādeva?

The king of the swans replied:

This mountain so enhanced in beauty by the moon
with its luster stolen from jasmin flowers—
Both shining in that lovely forest—
Surely is the Lord of the World's grove, self-existent,
"Light Rays Cloud" by name.

Closer and closer they went to this forest and eventually arrived in the grove "Light Rays Cloud." It was frequented by contemplative people, crowded with lovely birds and luxuriant trees, and flower-beds were its smile. Clear and cool waterfalls came from many springs, and the entire lake shore was covered with yellow-green grass. Handsome exclaimed:

21

**Look at this place shimmering like a peacock's neck,
Delightful in its solitude and so very lovely with its
 medicinal trees, flowers and fruits,
Colorful, its clear cool water covered with lotus flowers.**

**While they went on they saw on a rocky shoulder of the snow
mountains a figure self-manifested from diamond. Handsome asked:**

**Whose is this lovely figure,
Its smiling face like the luster of the moon,
Standing there by itself near the snow-mountain,
Emitting light rays from his bodily markings?**

The king of the swans replied:

**This is the figure of the noble Lord of the World
Who has appeared self-manifest so that merits
 may increase.**

And he began his praise:

**Salutation to Lord Avalokiteśvara,
Whose beautiful figure, near the pure white mountain,
Looking down (on the world), is seated immobile on a lotus,
And from whose tuft of hair Infinite Light spreads forth.**

**Passing on from this grove they saw in the east a partly luminous
city surrounded by trees. Handsome asked:**

**What is this wonder,
Encircled by garlands of Wish-granting trees,
With people as its smiling face,
Like a heaven, the realm of the gods!**



Avalokiteśvara

The swan replied:

With trees whose blossoms are wide open
And bedecked with garlands of jewels
This beautiful and lovely city
Certainly is "Birthplace of Happiness."

With these words they went on and finally came to this city. It was full of people and of all the riches one could desire. Teaching the people there, they were praised by them and attained the dignity befitting teachers. They lived there for several years, but then left this excellent city in order to realize ultimate release. They came to the forest grove of Vajrapāṇi, the garden "Birthplace of Magnificence," which was situated in an easterly direction from this city.

It was now close to springtime and a variety of flowers were now wide open. The dense forest with its pleasant sounds was rich in various kinds of sandalwood trees; and in its upper part there was a lake fed by streams of clear water that came from many springs; and at a slope where bees were humming drunkenly, the travellers had a vision of what seemed from the distance to be many figures—Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajradhara²⁴—emerging from various stone formations with eminent beings bowing before them. The king of the swans was overjoyed and said:

Even (the sight of) Indra twirling his moustache sprinkled
with sandal powder
Could not create such joy
As this joy which I experience by seeing this calm forest
For which I have longed for such a long time.²⁵

When they came to the bank of a river close by, they saw Avalokiteśvara himself approaching. Handsome exclaimed:



Mañjuśrī

**This is a most beautiful miracle,
It is as if the full moon
Is falling from the sky
Down to this cool river bank.**

Drawing still closer they folded their hands in salutation and made an offering of flowers. The king of the swans then uttered these words of praise:

**Salutation to Lord Avalokiteśvara,
Lord of the World, exalted Buddha,
Whose presence (envisioned as a) figure adorned
with all auspicious signs
Is forever diligently working for the sake of sentient beings.**

And Handsome exclaimed these words of praise:

**Salutation to noble Avalokiteśvara,
To whom even this river of cool water hastens
When it has seen him in the splendor
of his signs and marks
Lovely as the full moon, (seated) on a lotus flower.**

Proceeding onwards they saw Mañjuśrī on a rocky slope, and the king of the swans extolled him by these words:

**Salutation to Lord Manjughosa,²⁶
Who, clad in a monk's robe of the color of clouds
at dusk and dawn,
From among the jewel rocks (he leans against),
Spreads rays of prosperity and happiness
in the ten directions.**

And Handsome said:

**Salutation to Him who dispels the (spiritual) darkness
of living beings,
The Exalted One on whom the stream of virtues
is complete,
Who, beautiful like fresh saffron,
Is seated immobile on lotus and moon.**

When they went further on they saw Vajrāpaṇi emerging near a rocky slope bathed in precious light. The king of the swans praised him in these words:

**Salutation to Vajrāpaṇi
Who, having the color of a swirling mass
of hideous smoke (and)
Sending forth angrily rolling clouds of terrifying shapes,
Announces the time for the defeat of Māra's armies.**

And Handsome extolled him in these words:

**Salutation to the Vanquisher of obstacles
Who, beautiful like the blue lotus flower (and)
Wearing a garland made of thousands of writhing snakes,
Spreads limitless light-rays into the ten regions.**

They continued their journey and came to the foot of a rocky hill. This was a place where people of former times had gone to practise austerities. It had much grass, many flowers and fruits; and it was enhanced in beauty by the presence of many caves and thatched huts. Here it was that Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi had appeared in person to ask and answer questions about the meaning of life. The king of the swans said:



Vajrāpaṇi

Here, near this rocky hill with its caves and medicinal trees,
 The place visited by the Lord of the World,
 Let us stay as long as we live,
 To realize the ultimate release.

And when they had found lodgings the king of the swans said:

Through the example of leaves in this forest here withering
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That our life is impermanent and has no substance
 And that its elements will fall apart and separate.²⁷

Through the example of bees gathering about
 the flowerbeds
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That from our body, as from our friends
 we have briefly met,
 We in the end will have to part.²⁸

Through the example of reflections appearing
 in a clear lake
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That all that appears in manifold guises
 has no reality as such
 But is the reflection of that openness
 which is endowed with every mode.²⁹

Through the example of a cloudless sky's brightness
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That King "Mind" himself is the continuum of Being
 experiencing itself in a meaningful gestalt
 (*chos-sku*)³⁰ which
 Has never come into existence (as some thing
 and which) is open, radiant, and unchanging.

Through the example of clouds dispersing in the sky³¹
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That (our) various thoughts, free in themselves,
 are the continuum of Being experiencing itself
 (in a meaningful gestalt, *chos-sku*) and that
 Whatever arises does so in utter freedom without
 a grasping (subject).

Through the example of flocks of birds
 soaring up into the sky³²
 Let us recognize this our mind to be the vault of the sky,
 And understand the spreading of the wings of experience
 and understanding
 To be the continuum of Being experiencing itself (*chos-sku*)
 nowhere localized.

Through the example of a rainbow in the clear sky³³
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That in the sky of (Being's) actuality concepts are the luster
 of its inherent intelligence (*rig-pa*),³⁴
 And that whatever arises is the King, radiant and open,
 with no grasping subject.

Through the example of an echo arising
 through certain conditions
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That all that is arises through conditions which themselves
 are devoid of reality
 And that this "being devoid" has no foundation or root
 and is (Being's) genuineness.

Through the example of cloud masses appearing
 in the unmoving sky
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That karmic actions and emotional upsets,
 all that is deemed to be good or bad
 Arises from the mind and depends on the mind,
 And that this mind is Experience-as-such
 having neither foundation nor root,
 Being's actuality, its inherent logic, a continuum
 that has been from all beginning.³⁵

Through the example of water being bright when the mud
 has been allowed to settle,
 Right now we must realize as a certainty
 That the various notions, when they have been allowed
 to be left alone
 Are Being experiencing itself (*chos-sku*), bright in itself
 and free in itself.

And thus they lived among the lakes and ponds near a rocky hill,
 and it became known that by composing themselves in calm
 concentration and by making efforts day and night as long as they
 lived, they had realized the higher states of being.

Therefore, those who are endowed with the wealth of self-
 discipline, contemplative awareness and learnings should leave scenes
 of madness; and at places that have been frequented by sincere
 people, in lonely spots for the practice of austerities, they should
 ignore the hurry-scurry of the world and apply themselves in utter
 concentration to the contemplative awareness of the profound and to
 the realization of life's intrinsic value.

May I and all beings reach the sun
 of the all-knowing knowledge
 Of the Exalted Spiritual Teacher of the living beings
 Through (this) splendor which emits thousands of rays
 of brilliantly white wholesomeness
 That cannot be outshone by the light from precious jewels.

In the sky “self-discipline” (*tshul-khrims*)
 the bird “intelligence” (*blo-gros*)³⁶
 With its well-built body of learning and the wings
 of contemplative awareness,
 Uttering its wailing cry of experience and understanding,
 Has composed the “Rain of Questions
 and Answers by a Swan.”

If matters should get worse, even though
 Tshul-khrims blo-gros bzang-po
 Has plainly spoken about
 Various ways people behave these days,
 Let (people) endure sweetly speaking scoundrels.

But if someone should be made angry by these statements
 It certainly means that in his heart these defects exist,
 And my advice is that smart people do not bow to them
 But leave them far behind.

The elephant “self-discipline” (*tshul-khrims*)
 with the golden chain “intelligence” (*blo-gros*)
 Bathed in rays of the sun which
 Cannot be outshone by the light of various jewels,
 Is enhanced by the presence in him
 of the Lord surpassing all gods.

But the fools who have been living with him for a long time
Have not seen him, in all these days, as the wise person he is.
The turtle at (the bottom of) a pond, though it may
 have stayed there for a hundred years,
Has never seen the color of a lotus flower
 floating on its top.³⁷

Although through the various powers of karmic
 actions and conditions in the past,
Persons may think they want to move on, yet they remain
 in the realm of their thoughts.
They are like people who have gathered
 at the shore of the ocean,
But have no boat to cross it, though they intend to go.

Now, by the power of merits accrued
 through having previously refined my aspirations
And by the strength of the true support of gods and saints
And that of my ingrained habit to persevere
I shall realize the aim I have harbored in my mind.

While this man from bSam-yas, having the mind
 of a sentient being,
Offers this message to be heard by those active
 in the service of sentient beings,
In order to gladden all sentient beings,
May good friends and other people deign to look at it.

Having crossed the four seas of frustration by steering
The boat of the well-sounding merits of the poem
 “Cloud-force” with the effort of higher aspirations

**May I and all sentient beings find freedom
On the jewel island “Everywhere-Light”³⁸ where there is
no suffering, being the birthplace of bliss
for sentient beings, and where the virtues
of the three gestalts³⁹ through which Being
experiences itself as being, are spontaneously present.**

**The “Rain of a Swan’s Questions and Answers” has been
composed in the ever-present bSam-yas, Padmasambhava’s res-
idence, by the master of poetry in Tibet, Ngag-gi dbang-po of bSam-
yas, not for the sake of poetry or literature, but for easy comprehension.**



Notes

1. The year of Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa's death is often given as 1363. This date refers to the beginning of the Tibetan lunar year, not to the end which falls into early 1364. It was towards the end of the Tibetan lunar year that Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa dies. See my *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Dharma Publishing, Emeryville 1975, Part I, p.xv.
2. *Ngang-pa'i dris-lan sprin-gyi snying-po* (in *Miscellaneous Writings [gsung thor-bu]* of Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-pa Dri-med 'od-zer, reproduced from xylographic prints from the A-'dzom 'Brug-pa Chos-sgar blocks by Sanje Dorje, Delhi 1973, vol. 1, pp. 331-354). Literally translated the title means "The Cloud-force of the Questions and Answers by a Swan." The term "cloud-force" is a metaphor for rain which symbolizes prosperity because rain makes the crops grow. By implication, the "rain" of the message contained in this composition will aid the reader's spiritual development.
A variation of the theme of this composition is presented by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa in his *Po-ta-la kun-tu dga'-ba'i gnam* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, pp. 35-137). This text will henceforward be quoted in the abbreviated form of *Po-ta-la*.
3. The full name of this stately temple-cum-monastery complex is dPal-gyi bSam-yas. It was built over a period of twelve years at an undecided date (ca. 775?) during the reign of the Tibetan king Khri-srong lde-brtsan (born 742, succeeded to the throne in 754 and died either in 797 or 804). An Indian temple at Otantapuri or at Nalanda in what today is the province of Bihar, is regarded as the prototype of this monastic complex. The central temple has three storeys; the lower one is said to represent the indigenous Tibetan style, the middle one the Chinese style, and the upper one the Indian style. Within the Tibetan tradition, bSam-yas holds a position similar to that of Rome in Catholicism. It was at bSam-yas that the Indian pandit Santaraksita and the "precious master" Padmasambhava were active. Santaraksita represented the strictly monastic way of Buddhism, emphasizing the epistemological and logical aspects of the Buddhist teaching; Padmasambhava, as a yogi, represented the "practical" side of Buddhism and emphasized what we would now call the existential-phenomenological aspect of the Buddhist teaching.

4. This gradation of spiritual awareness, presented in the emotionally moving and aesthetically pleasing images of Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajrapāṇi, reflects the dynamic character of Buddhism which may be said to be pure process thinking. There is nothing static, any “rest” is merely temporary and preparatory for a further advance. See also note 16.
5. *Kāvyādarśa* I 24.
6. *Tshig-su bcad-pa'i bstan-bcos me-tog-gi rgyan* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 2, pp. 609-622). The thirty-five ornaments are listed in *Kāvyādarśa* II 4-7. These verses form the first chapter in Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa's work. Another instance of the high esteem in which Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa held Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* is his frequent use of the poetic figure termed *yamaka* (Tibetan *zung-lan*) in Indian poetics. It is about the only “ornament” that can be imitated in English, except for position, without doing violence to the English language. Due to the character of the Tibetan language this poetic figure is mostly found in the repetition of syllables (words) at the beginning or end of a metrical line. However, in his *Tshogs-bdag-gi bstod-pa* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 185-189), Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa uses the *yamaka* at the beginning and end of the first half of a single metrical line. Daṇḍin had a predilection for this poetic figure and has given it “one of the fullest treatments in the whole realm of *Alaṃkāra* literature.” See Dharmendra Kumar Gupta, *A critical study of Daṇḍin and his works*. Meharchand Lachhmandar, Delhi 1970, p. 238, quoting S.K. De, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, Calcutta 1960, vol. 2, p. 64.
7. Sarasvatī is the divine patroness of poets and writers and has been—actually still is being worshipped by artistically minded and intellectual, truly spiritual, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa wrote a small “hymn of praise” (*stotra*), in twenty-two verses, to her, the *dbyangs-can-ma-la bstod-pa gzhon-nu rol-dga'i dbyangs* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 182-185). The first part is devoted to a description of her beauty. A few quotations may illustrate the poetic imagery involved:

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—(who are)
 The goddess whose quintessence is supreme joy,
 Residing on the island of talents in the ocean;
 Mother of all the Buddhas and their descendants.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—(you who)
 From the melting ice of compassion
 (As) the goddess newly born
 (Now) gently descend on the water and wind of ornate poetry.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—(who are)
 Beautiful like the moon on the fifteenth day of the month,
 With a smiling face of a sixteen year old girl,
 Wearing a girdle of cymbals as ornament.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—(who are)
 Like a lotus on a throne formed by a lotus and the moon,
 Brilliantly white like the (mountain) king
 amongst the mountains,
 Like a concentration of white clouds in autumn.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—(whose)
 White face has (the beauty of) the moon's luster,
 (Who) are seated on a throne (made) of the full moon,
 Making a shawl for your shoulders of the moon.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—(who)
 Carrying off the strength, the rays, and the luster
 Of an elephant, the moon, and a lotus
 (Are) resplendent everywhere and throughout like the sun.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—
 If this snow mountain had lotus eyes
 It would resemble your face, (for)
 Your figure (itself) is like a snow mountain's peak.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—
 When one, over and again, visualizing your form
 Attends to the phonemes *A, Ā*
 (You) dispel (spiritual) darkness by teaching
 the gnosemes *Hṛīm, Hṛīm*.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—
E-ma! beautiful heroine and yoginī (who)
 Like a rainbow in the sky
 Are the reflection of the visible and invisible.

Salutation to you, Sarasvatī—
 Within the mass of light (that constitutes) your figure
 Rays of light, diffracted and undiffracted,
 scintillate (in colors of)
 White, yellow, red and green.

In his supplication which forms the later part, Klong-chen rab-
 'byams-pa says:

E-ma! Gracious goddess,
 Whereas you are now (with me) after long devotion,
 When the time comes that I want to see, hear
 and ask you again
 Reveal (to me) your presence.

May the moon of your spiritual appreciation
 With its superb whiteness graciously shine on
 All those who trust
 You and your (spiritual) descendants.

From now on, in all existences (to come),
 May I be looked after by you, O bounteous one,
 And may my mind turn into that ultimate
 appreciative discrimination
 Which is not limited or fixed in any way.

In the lotus forest of existences,
 May I forever be shielded (by you)
 Holding the hundred-leafed lotus of fame
 With its honey of status, beauty, and talent.

In the concluding verse, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa incorporates his
 monastic name, Tshul-khrims blo-gros, and uses the image of the
 swan:

When from the lotus pond "Self-discipline" (*tshul-khrims*)
 The swan "Intelligence" (*blo-gros*) utters its cry
 And (spreads) its white wings "Three Disciplines"
 May all clear-minded beings rejoice.

The three disciplines to which allusion is made, are (1) dynamic ethics evolving over many levels and including transpersonal dimensions; (2) in-depth appraisals of reality by meticulously attending to the possibilities in man's growth and evolution; (3) appreciative discrimination which avoids the pitfalls of spiritual, social and cultural death and leads to creative self-transcendence. Significantly, self-discipline in the sense of a multilevel, dynamic ethic is, in Buddhism, the foundation in the absence of which any attempt at becoming a "spiritual" being turns out to be a dismal failure. A dynamic and multilevel ethic, as demanded by Buddhism, is therefore the first glimpse of man's interconnectedness with the universe and makes possible its in-depth appraisal as leading to a "feeling" of wholeness (usually associated with concentration and meditation in which the fixation that easily occurs, is then acclaimed as an "achievement"). This feeling of wholeness serves as the basis for gaining insight into reality, this insight as discriminative appreciation assisting in removing the fictions about reality we ordinarily entertain. Discriminative appreciation remains a tool.

8. Although Padmasambhava's historicity is beyond doubt, the obscurity that surrounds this personage is such that the historian Sum-pa mkhan-po (1704-1786) distinguished between a "true" Padmasambhava who spent a long time in Tibet and a "false" Padmasambhava who was a Nepalese medium and stayed in Tibet only briefly.
9. A variation of this theme is given by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa in his *Nags-tshal kun-tu dga'-ba'i gtam* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 137-149), p. 139. In this text (henceforth abbreviated as *Nags-tshal*) he says:

A person who handsomely embodies proper training,
 having as his wings the three disciplines
 And living in a pond with the lotuses
 of learning and contemplation,

If he has no money, is despised and rejected by all.
 But the rich indulging in senseless crimes
 are worshipped like gods.
 This is a time when fools stand in higher esteem than sages;—
 Having seen this present state of affairs I am off to the forest.

10. See above note 7.
11. This is a critique of the practice of soliciting donations while no longer setting an example through one's conduct for others. From a spiritual point of view it is one's duty to make gifts in the sense of enabling a person to stand on his/her own feet. Such a gift is only possible if one is strict with oneself and does not succumb to escapist (irresponsible) tendencies.
12. In his *Po-ta-la*, p. 97, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa expresses this theme as follows:

Alas! nowadays in this region
 The sun of the good old times has set.
 And now, since the companion of evil has risen
 Simultaneously with the *padma* (lotus) flower
 of sincere people closing
 The *kunda* (jasmin) flower of evil conduct opens.
 As if covered by the darkness of Māra's armies
 Precious trees are encircled by poisonous snakes.
 The cool lakes and ponds of sincere people are drying up
 And the sun of the Teaching is setting
 behind the Western Mountain peak.
 Look how even the eyes of the decent and fortunate
 grow blind.

The expression "companion of evil" is a metaphor for the moon. The moon, like the sun, as a luminary is neither good nor evil, but shining at night it "aids" those who are about to engage in sinister activities.

13. The same image is used in *Po-ta-la*, p. 97 and *Nags-tshal*, p. 138. See also the previous note.

14. Self-respect and decorum are two important and positive aspects of a healthy person's mind. The traditional definition of these two so-called "positive mental events" is given in Herbert V. Guenther & Leslie S. Kawamura, *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, Dharma Publishing, Emeryville, 1975, pp. 42f.
15. In *Po-ta-la*, p. 98, it is a group of gods who travel to the Potala mountain, the residence of Avalokiteśvara. This mountain is located in South India. Its name was transferred to the temple-palace of the Dalai Lamas of Tibet, who were believed to be the ever-renewed incarnations of Avalokiteśvara.
16. Avalokiteśvara is the symbol of compassion (*karuṇā*, *thugs-rje*) as the (spiritually, not emotionally) actional function (*upāya*, *thabs*) of what, for want of a better term, may be called "intelligent life." Mañjuśrī is the symbol for appreciative discrimination (*prajñā*, *shes-rab*) as the cognitive and hence thoroughly open function of intelligent life. Both features are complementary to each other, none can operate meaningfully in isolation, and as such they present the dynamics of Being which, unlike the many kinds and forms of beings, is not only *not* a granular isolatable entity but also indestructible as indicated by the symbol of the diamond (*vajra*, *rdo-rje*), Vajrapāṇi being the anthropomorphically intelligible form of Being-as-such. In its "field" character it is imaged as a castle which withstands any assaults—it is indestructible. Thus, our actions as compassion and our understanding as appreciation derive their meaning from the intelligence of the universe (Being) which "informs" every aspect of it.
17. A moving account of the beauty of forests is given in *Nags-tshal*, pp. 143f.:

Hear, O mind, about the virtues of forests:

Precious trees, worthy to honor the Buddhas,
 Bending under the load of the fruits, grow well in forests;
 Spreading their leaves and opening
 their sweet-smelling blossoms
 They stand there with the fragrance of incense
 and the scent of a cool breeze.

Sending forth the lovely sound of drums—
 the mountain torrents,
 And engulfed in the cool light of the moon, the slopes
 Are covered by a garment of thick clouds.

There flocks of female swans fly up
 from sweet-smelling ponds,
 So enhanced in beauty all around by the host of stars;
 Birds and deer, in large numbers, move about happily.
 Lotuses, sandal trees, and water lilies
 Are circled by bees, their humming being their songs.

Fruit-laden trees seem to perform a dance with their swaying
 And creepers with lowering their fingertip-like tendrils
 Welcome the guest—"Please enter."

Cool lakes grown over with lotus flowers
 Seem to radiate the luster of a smiling face.
 Groves with fresh flowers as ornamental garlands (and)
 Meadows seem to cling tenaciously to the deep blue sky
 as a covering.

Similar to the stars rising in the clear sky
 The gods seem to sport in these groves of joy.

While the cuckoo sings a song in drunken melodies,
 The swirling seasonal wind seems to prance
 around the flowers.

While the cloud elephant trumpets its joy
 The auspicious arrival of rain seems to bring some coolness.

Edible roots, leaves and fruits
 Are, unpolluted, available in forests
 throughout the four seasons.

Even the emotions naturally subside in forests:
 There is none to speak unfriendly words.
 Since one is far away from the cities
 with their hustle and bustle

Calming concentration naturally intensifies in forests.
 Becoming attuned to the true this mind is tamed
 And the bliss of inner peace is attained in forests.

Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa's love of nature and poetic gifts are evident in the following verses from the *Blo-gsal ri-bon-gi rtogs-pa brjod-pa'i dris-lan lha'i rnga-bo che lta-bu'i gnam* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 1, pp.7-95), pp. 11f.:

Seeing the swarm of bees drunk with the pollen
at the bank of a pond
Adorned with garlands of murmuring bubbles,
The sandal trees, waving playfully their branches (like hands)
Seem to beckon to the forest maidens.

The moment the bees had been caught
by a cluster of lotus flowers,
The grove of lovely trees could not restrain its anger
And with shaking the tender tips of the mottled branches
Retaliated for the affront by the pollen.

In this grove with luscious flowers at the bank of a pond,
The Buddha-bee seated on a lotus flower
Rolls out the drum of (life's) meaning
and in these beautiful surroundings
The thickets seems to listen rapturously to the true message.

18. *bla-ma*. This term refers to what may best be called the pure potential of evolution which assumes different forms on different levels. In the purely human context, this moving force expressed itself in the person of the Buddha—"He who has woken up" to this very force which as life's meaningfulness initiates man's self-transcendence, always reaching beyond limited horizons. Despite the personalistic rendering of this technical term there is no cult of personality involved.
19. The bKa'-gdams'pa order—the name literally means "those who are bound by the Buddha's pronouncements"—was founded by Atisa's favorite disciple 'Brom-ston (1008-1064) who avoided publicity of all kinds and led a life of seclusion at the monastery of Rva-sgreng which he had founded in 1056.
20. *sems-nyid*. Experience-as-such is not the same as an experience of something. Experience-as-such makes experience as experience-of possible; it remains creative throughout.

21. The Developing Stage (*bskyed-rim*) is a process of imagination and visualization of the intrapsychic forces as divinities, while the Fulfilment Stage (*rdzogs-rim*) is a process of appreciative understanding. These stages are complementary to each other in such a manner that novelty is transformed into confirmation.
22. Bon is a summary term for all forms of religion and customs prior to the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. To equate it with shamanism, as is often done, is an oversimplification. Moreover, no distinction is made between purely Tibetan Bon adherents (Bonpo) and foreign Bonpos. Far from being a "primitive" religion, Bon may have done more than has been supposed towards preparing the ground for the easy spread of Buddhism. Zhang-zhung, in whose territory Mt. Kailas and Lake Manasarowar are situated, has traditionally been considered to be the home of Bon. The country was open to India, both through Nepal and by way of Kashmir and Ladakh. Until recently Indians went on pilgrimage to Mt. Kailas and Lake Manasarowar. It may not be without interest to point out that in 950 the Hindu king of Kabul (Afghanistan) had a statue of Viṣṇu which he claimed to have received from the king of the Tibetans who, in turn, had obtained it from the region of Mt. Kailas. This would explain the use of the *g.yung-drung* or *svastika*, an emblem of Viṣṇu, by the Bonpos. The term *g.yung-drung* also denotes eternalism, an idea maintained by Hindu philosophers.
23. True to its nature of being pure process thinking, Buddhism clearly points out that our interests center on *events* and not so much on *things* in static spatial relations. It is causal connections and activities which we want to conceive and communicate. This we do by language which *names* such relations, just like substantives. To give an example: we name two items and place the name of the relation between them:—the giver, the given, and the giving—indicating that "giving" holds between giver and given.
24. Vajradhara and Vajrapāṇi are identical in the sense that the one is the inverse of the other. As a rule, Vajradhara is imaged as calm and quiet, Vajrapāṇi as fierce and agitated. Their unified coherence may be

likened to the mathematical concept of an abstract group G operating as having an identity element $I \in G$ such that $I * a = a = a * I$ for any $a \in G$. This identity is unique. There are, furthermore, inverses; that is, for any $a \in G$ there exists $a^{-1} \in G$ such that

$$a * a^{-1} = I = a^{-1} * a$$

25. Indra was one of the major gods in the Vedic period, noted for his drunkenness and lechery. In the *R̥gveda* special reference is made to his "yellow moustache" (*haritā śmaśrū*) deeply immersed in the intoxicating Soma beverage. The fact that Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa makes reference to this attribute of Indra reveals his vast knowledge of the Indian tradition as well. In Buddhism, Indra as ruler of gods forming a set of thirty-three, is little more than a stage-hand.
26. Mañjuḥṣa is another name for Mañjuśrī. The former appellation emphasizes his melodious voice, the later his luster and splendor. Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa wrote two small hymns of praise of Mañjuśrī, the '*Phags-pa 'Jams-dpal-la bstod-pa me-tog-gi chun-po* (in *Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 1, pp. 178-180) and the '*Phags-pa 'Jam-dpal gzhon-nu-la bstod-pa mi'am ci'i dbyangs-snyan* (ibid., pp. 180-192).
27. In his *Nags-tshal*, p. 145, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa elaborates this example as follows:

Through the example of leaves in this forest here withering
We must realize as a certainty that one's good fortune
is going to decline.
Beauty and youth and one's specific talents
Gradually deteriorate and (as such) have no (abiding) essence.
28. The same idea in slightly different wording is found in *Po-ta-la*, pp. 101, 134 and *Nags-tshal*, p. 135.
29. With slight variations the same is said in *Po-ta-la*, p. 134.
30. This term indicates the experience of the meaningfulness (*chos*, Sanskrit *dharma*) of Being-as-such which we, as sentient beings, cannot but make intelligible to ourselves in terms of a gestalt (*sku*,

Sanskrit *kāya*). A gestalt refers to a perceptive structure relating to what is “perceived” as a whole. It does not refer to what is deducible from the properties of the elements in what is “perceived” holistically. In our limitation of being “embodied” beings we tend to interpret whatever we experience in terms of “bodies” and hence we “perceive” the dynamics of Being-as-such in the image of Man. But since man also is a social being, this idea of Man is expressed (and “perceived”) in the image of the king, the supreme authority. In mentalistic terms this supreme authority is what we call “mind” (*sems*, Sanskrit *citta*). This “mind” constitutes, in Buddhist psychology, a positive and/or negative feedback coupling which allows for transitions between different dynamic regimes. Aids in making such (vital) transitions are summarized under the heading of yoga and related techniques.

31. In his *Po-ta-la*, p. 134, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa develops this example as follows:

Through the example of clouds dispersing in their source,
the sky,
Right now we must realize as a certainty
That all (our) actions and emotions,
(our) happiness and suffering (due to them)
Are such as to fade away in the (very) place
from which they first have come.

32. In his *Po-ta-la*, p. 135, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa says:

Through the example of flocks of birds
soaring in the expanse of the sky
(Right now we must realize as a certainty)
That the quietly hovering bird of intelligence
in the vastness of Experience-as-such
Lets whatever arises be, without interfering with it
by the notion of a subject or taking sides.
The continuum of meaningful reality is there in (and as)
the sky's orb.

The bracketed line is missing in the printed text and has been inserted in accordance with the other example given.

33. In his *Po-ta-la*, p. 134, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa has this to say:
- Through the example of a rainbow fading in the sky high up
We must understand that the various vibrations
(of our thought processes) are the outward glow of
(Being's)
intelligence (operating in) pristine cognitions (and that)
This intelligence free in its state (of being itself)
the range of Being experiencing itself,
Is unconcerned with (our) accepting or rejecting,
negating or affirming (it).
34. The idea of an intelligent universe is basic to rDzogs-chen thinking. This intelligence (*rig-pa*), pervasive of Being-as-such, is the lucency and radiancy of Experience-as-such (*sems-nyid*) which has the tendency to "collapse" into an experience of something or other and as such constitutes what we ordinarily call "mind" (*sems*). But even in this collapsed state the dynamics of Being remains intact and is symbolized as King.
35. In his *Po-ta-la*, p. 133, Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa rephrases this idea as follows:
- All that is (for us) has risen from our mind (*sems*), but
this mind (which we are) has risen from the reach
and range (that is) Experience-as-such (*sems-nyid*).
Experience-as-such is beyond any (thing in the nature of a)
foundation or root—it has not risen
from anything whatsoever nor is it something made up.
Its qualitative being itself must be understood as having been
atemporally serene and like the (open) sky.
This state which really is our mind remains happily
in (its true state) when no thematic disturbances
and proliferations occur.

In our diction this means that Experience-as-such does not depend on something other than itself ("being without foundation") and does not grow from something other than itself ("having no root"). Its being-itself or its actuality is qualitative ("pure"), only the theories about it, the thematizations, are quantitative ("impure").

36. There is a pun involved. Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa's monastic name was Tshul-khrims blo-gros.
37. The same image is used by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa in his *Po-ta-la*, p.136.
38. "Everywhere light" (*kun-tu 'od*) is an epithet of the Buddha-level, the thirteenth spiritual level (*sa*) in traditional counting.
39. The "three gestalts" are Being-as-such experiencing itself as meaningfully being (*chos-sku*, Sanskrit *dharmakāya*); in so doing it creates a scenario in which it is actively participating (*longs-sku*, Sanskrit *sambhogakāya*); and in this participation it manifests and sees itself in many cultural roles (*sprul-sku*, Sanskrit *nirmāṇakāya*). These gestalts are experiential processes, not static entities, and may be likened to what in mathematics is known as symmetry transformations. Each specific gestalt has and is its pristine and atemporal (*ye*) cognition (*shes*), a kind of *Urwissen*, not of or about something, but a cognitiveness which is such that gestalt (*sku*) and pristine (atemporal) cognition (*ye-shes*) are inseparable—"they cannot be added up nor severed," as the texts repeatedly state.

